

What is claimed is:

1 1. An image forming apparatus for transmitting and
2 receiving data to/from an external apparatus, the image forming
3 apparatus comprising:

4 a communication unit that accesses the external apparatus,
5 and when the external apparatus stores image data addressed
6 to the image forming apparatus, obtains the image data;

7 an image forming unit that performs an image forming
8 operation according to the obtained image data;

9 a power-saving control unit that controls a power-saving
10 mode to be activated or deactivated; and

11 a communication control unit that controls the
12 communication unit to make an access to the external apparatus
13 while the power-saving mode is deactivated.

1 2. The image forming apparatus of Claim 1, wherein
2 the access is made when the power-saving mode gets
3 deactivated.

1 3. The image forming apparatus of Claim 1, wherein
2 the access is made when an image forming operation ends.

1 4. The image forming apparatus of Claim 1, wherein
2 the communication control unit further controls the
3 communication unit to make another access to the external

4 apparatus when a first time period has passed after a last access
5 to the external apparatus.

1 5. The image forming apparatus of Claim 1, further
2 comprising:

3 a prohibition unit that prohibits the communication unit
4 from accessing the external apparatus, until a second time period
5 has passed after a last access to the external apparatus.

1 6. The image forming apparatus of Claim 5, wherein
2 the power-saving control unit activates the power-saving
3 mode when no image forming operation is performed for a third
4 time period, and the second time period is shorter than the
5 third time period.

1 7. The image forming apparatus of Claim 6, wherein
2 the external apparatus functions as an electronic mail
3 server, and the image data that the communication unit obtains
4 from the external apparatus is image data attached to electronic
5 mail.

1 8. An image forming system comprising: a server for storing
2 image data; and an image forming apparatus for transmitting
3 and receiving data to/from the server via a network, wherein
4 the server includes:

5 a storage unit that stores image data in correspondence
6 with a network address; and
7 a transmission unit that, in response to a request
8 by an external terminal, transmits image data that corresponds
9 to a network address of the external terminal, and
10 the image forming apparatus includes:
11 a request unit that accesses the server and requests,
12 from the server, image data addressed to the image forming
13 apparatus;
14 a reception unit that receives the image data transmitted
15 from the server;
16 an image forming unit that performs an image forming
17 operation according to the received image data;
18 a power-saving control unit that controls a power-saving
19 mode to be activated or deactivated; and
20 a request control unit that controls the request unit
21 to access the server while the power-saving mode is deactivated.

1 9. An image forming method executed in an image forming
2 apparatus, the image forming apparatus having a power-saving
3 unit that controls a power-saving mode to be activated or
4 deactivated, and being for transmitting and receiving data
5 to/from an external apparatus, the image forming method
6 comprising:

7 an image-data obtaining step of making an access to the

8 external apparatus while the power-saving mode is deactivated,
9 and of, when the external apparatus stores image data addressed
10 to the image forming apparatus, obtaining the image data; and
11 an image forming step of performing an image forming
12 operation according to the obtained image data.

1 10. The image forming method of Claim 9, wherein
2 the access is made when the power-saving mode gets
3 deactivated.

1 11. The image forming method of Claim 9, wherein
2 the access is made when an image forming operation ends.

1 12. The image forming method of Claim 9, wherein
2 in the image-data obtaining step, another access to the
3 external apparatus is performed when a first time period has
4 passed after a last access to the external apparatus.

1 13. The image forming method of Claim 9, wherein
2 the image-data obtaining step includes an access
3 prohibition substep of prohibiting an access to the external
4 apparatus, until a second time period has passed after a last
5 access to the external apparatus.

1 14. The image forming method of Claim 13, wherein

2 the power-saving control unit activates the power-saving
3 mode when no image forming operation is performed for a third
4 time period, and the second time period is shorter than the
5 third time period.

1 15. The image forming method of Claim 9, wherein
2 the external apparatus functions as an electronic mail
3 server, and the image data obtained at the image-data obtaining
4 step from the external apparatus is image data attached to
5 electronic mail.

1 16. A program executed in an image forming apparatus,
2 the image forming apparatus having a power-saving unit that
3 controls a power-saving mode to be activated or deactivated,
4 and being for transmitting and receiving data to/from an external
5 apparatus, the program making the image forming apparatus
6 perform:

7 an image-data obtaining operation of accessing the
8 external apparatus while the power-saving mode is deactivated,
9 and of, when the external apparatus stores image data addressed
10 to the image forming apparatus, obtaining the image data; and

11 an image forming operation of performing an image forming
12 operation according to the obtained image data.

1 17. A computer-readable recording medium that stores

2 therein a program executed in an image forming apparatus, the
3 image forming apparatus having a power-saving unit that controls
4 a power-saving mode to be activated or deactivated, and being
5 for transmitting and receiving data to/from an external
6 apparatus, the program making the image forming apparatus
7 perform:

8 an image-data obtaining operation of accessing the
9 external apparatus while the power-saving mode is deactivated,
10 and of, when the external apparatus stores image data addressed
11 to the image forming apparatus, obtaining the image data; and
12 an image forming operation of performing an image forming
13 operation according to the obtained image data.